



PUBLIC VALUE PARTNERSHIPS

The Three Rs at work in Montana

Public Value Partnership grants between Montana nonprofit arts organizations and the Montana Arts Council champion the fact that the arts are of benefit to all the citizens of Montana and are worthy of state and federal investment.

Public Value Partnerships utilize three tools we call “The Three Rs” to expand the public value of the work being done by Montana’s non-profit arts organizations:

- Building relationships;
- Creating greater relevance and meaning; and
- Establishing return on investment (measured both as economic vitality and impact on people’s lives).

MAC believes that using “The Three Rs” strengthens participation, understanding and support from audiences, donors and funders. We’d like to share some of the best examples of these stories with you from 2013:

Building Relationships

Missoula Art Museum (MAM): MAM is striving to increase the exposure and interaction between our audience and the exhibiting artists that we present. As a contemporary art museum we present almost exclusively living artists.

MAM engages artists as the primary source for art education. We engage each exhibiting artist in presenting formal lectures or informal gallery talks about their work as well as conducting a hands-on workshop, demonstration or master class.

Last year we tried a different opportunity with three artists who were commissioned by MAM to make site-specific installations in our galleries. In an attempt to provide less formal interaction, MAM created informal “artists residencies,” inviting the public in to observe and interact with artists as they were building their work.

This worked so well in some instances that the progress of the installation was slowed because of lengthy conversations between visitors and artists. It also inspired community members to offer to help the artists.

University of Montana School of Art professors brought classes to the galleries to spend their class time hanging out with artists. Each of the artists made new fans who also became friends. Spontaneous socialization took place that wasn’t arranged by the museum.

We witnessed an increased sense of ownership in the visitors when they came to the opening reception after experiencing the work in progress, and having insider information after interacting with the artist beforehand.

To keep the artist’s voice present in the exhibition after the installation is complete, MAM strives to create audio spots recorded by the exhibiting artist, as well as video interviews or filmed gallery talks in the exhibitions.

Creating Relevance

Intermountain Opera, Bozeman: For our May 2013 production we were able to add what we call our “up-close and personal” section on our website about our guest artists. During a marketing meeting there was talk about how people gravitate to people and that we needed to find personal stories about or from our guest artists that might resonate with our patrons.

A new member of the board is a journalist who took on the project of connecting with our guest artists by email and phone and was able to put together some insightful stories on our artists that we then shared on our

website. The story behind one of the guest artists not only built connections with patrons it also caught the attention of the local paper which generated a centerfold story in the entertainment section prior to the opera.

Here is a sample of the up-close and personal excerpt from the website:

For physicist Philip Judge, a walk with his newly adopted border collie/cur mix, Nellie, on an icy February afternoon brought a stunning epiphany. “I was singing ... because I



Intermountain Opera: “Romeo et Juliette” scene following the sword fight. (Dress rehearsal photo by Bruce Jodar, Wildeye photography)

While Judge can wax on about the splendor of opera and the opportunity in Bozeman that doesn’t exist elsewhere (“In Boulder, they know me as a physicist and don’t think I could possibly be an opera singer as well”) he is not exactly circumspect when it comes

to his hopes for “Roméo et Juliette.” “I’m so looking forward to wearing tights,” he enthuses. “I’m hoping to get the biggest cod piece because I’m The Duke.”

Return on Investment

Glacier Symphony and Chorale (GSC), Kalispell: In March of 2013, the GSC initiated a study funded by Northwest Energy and undertaken by Solution Mountain of Bozeman to understand further the economic impact that the GSC has in the local economy.

We were pleasantly surprised to discover that the study found that the GSC has an economic impact of \$1.27 million dollars locally and impacts

51 jobs. While a modest expense budget of \$650,000 is put to work by the GSC, the multiplicative impact to the economy and jobs is impressive.

Our board of directors was proud to see that by raising private funds and selling tickets to concerts, those dollars were pumped

back into the local economy and impacted more jobs and people than we imagined.

Some of our major expense budget items are:

- Personnel and Salaries \$397,783
- Equipment Rental \$10,961
- Design, Printing, and Advertising \$52,254
- Rent \$17,272

A good specific example of how one of our expense items helped another local business leverage themselves was the collaboration between the Glacier Symphony and Chorale and the Whitefish Chamber of Commerce to commit to five week-ends of use of a new performance tent that was

purchased by Celebrate Rentals (it cost over \$60,000). By the commitment of our organization to rent the tent at a pre-arranged price, Celebrate was able to commit to the capital investment of purchasing the tent.

Now the Flathead Valley has access to a world-class performance tent that is available for rent, that would not have been otherwise. It has helped Celebrate Rentals serve this important market with a new product that they would not have been able to afford without the collaborative effort.

Celebrate Rentals is now a major corporate sponsor of the Glacier Symphony and Chorale because of this effort to work on a project that was mutually beneficial to both organizations.



Missoula Art Museum: Jane Deschner gives a gallery talk during a First Friday opening in May 2013. (Photo by Ted Hughes)

can’t really vocalize in the apartment without being somewhat unpopular with the neighbors,” he jokes. “And I realized that I am a baritone, not a bass as I’d always been told.” The revelation was exciting for the vocalist who is currently preparing for his role as the Duke of Verona in the upcoming Intermountain Opera production of “Roméo et Juliette.”

At MSU on a year-long sabbatical from the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Colorado, Judge has been a singer his whole life. He accepted a choral scholarship from Oxford University in his native England, where he studied physics, and has sung in countless choirs and a number of operas in the decades since.

When he researched the professionals engaged for the upcoming opera, Judge remembers being startled.

“I thought, ‘My God, they’ve got some pretty good singers.’” And by “pretty good,” Judge was quick to point out that he didn’t mean “good for the backend of Montana.”

When the opportunity arose for him to perform in “Roméo et Juliette,” the singer jumped at the chance and is currently training under MSU music professor and Intermountain Opera choral master, Dr. Jon Harney.

“The thrill of singing with these people is just everything,” he says. “How often am I going to sing with someone from the Met?” Despite two bone-marrow transplants within a year a decade ago, Judge is very clear about the biggest obstacle in preparing for his first operatic performance since the 1980s. “Being trained as a choral singer,” he says, “is incredibly difficult to get over.”



Glacier Symphony and Chorale: An outdoor concert in Celebrate Rentals’ performance tent. (Photo by Brenda Ahearn for GSC, 2013)

IRS rolls out new 1023-EZ for exempt applications

The Internal Revenue Service recently launched the new Form 1023-EZ, a shorter version of the traditional application for groups seeking 501(c)(3) exempt status.

The tax agency announced a streamlined version was forthcoming in March and solicited public comments. According to the press release, as many as 70% of 501(c)(3) hopefuls are eligible to submit the three-page form, edited down from the 26-page original. The new version is available to certain organizations with gross receipts up to \$50,000 and assets up to \$250,000.

IRS Commissioner John Koskinen said the change will reduce wait times for applicants and enable his agency to “devote more compliance activity on the back end to ensure groups are actually doing the charitable work they apply to do.”

Unlike its longer counterpart, the Form 1023-EZ must be filed electronically. Some sector leaders raise concerns about the new form, including the fact that applicants miss the educational benefits inherent in completing the full Form 1023.

— Source: BNA Daily Tax Report